

**EDUCATION REPORT - Learning Disabilities, Part 7: Attention Deficit Disorder***By Nancy Steinbach*

Broadcast: March 18, 2004

This is Steve Ember with the VOA Special English Education Report.

We continue our series about learning disabilities. So far, we have discussed some of the brain disorders that make different skills unusually difficult to learn. Last week, we told how schools can help.

Today, we discuss something that is not considered a learning disability itself. We include it in our series because it can interfere with learning. Our subject is attention deficit disorder, or A.D.D. A related form is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder -- A.D.H.D.

These are some of the signs of one or both: Children cannot sit still and control themselves. They talk excessively, and do not seem to listen. They lose things, forget easily and are not able to finish tasks.

Many of us experience problems like these at one time or another. But people with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D. say it interferes with their lives and threatens their chances for success. One woman says it is like having twenty televisions in her head, all on different programs.

Doctors say the cause involves chemical balances in the brain. It can affect not only school performance, but also personal relationships and the ability to keep a job. Many people with attention deficit are also found to have a learning disability or suffer from depression.

A doctor has to identify A.D.D or A.D.H.D. There are drugs to help the chemical balances in the brain. These drugs calm people down, so they can finish tasks. But there are also possible side effects.

Critics say parents and doctors are often too quick to give drugs. Some children outgrow effects like hyperactivity. Critics also express concern at the growing numbers of boys and girls identified with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D. Others say these are real disabilities.

Drugs alone are not enough. Other important parts of treatment include providing a supportive environment. Students need to learn organizational skills, better use of time and different ways to study. They often need extended time to take tests, and individual help from concerned adults. Experts say children who make problems in class may not find their schoolwork interesting enough or difficult enough.

Our series continues next week. All of our reports are on the Internet at [voaspecialenglish.com](http://voaspecialenglish.com). We also have links to organizations for people with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D in thirty-nine countries around the world.

This VOA Special English Education Report was written by Nancy Steinbach. This is Steve Ember.



Email this article to a friend



Printer Friendly Version